

Chapter 8

Working-Class Nationalism in a Scottish Village

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Introduction

The case study presented here is based upon fieldwork on the relationship between class and the politicization of national identity during the restoration of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 in the former coalmining village of Cardenden, Fife.¹ While the relationship between class and nation is a central problematic in the literature on Scottish nationalism (Nairn 1981, 1997; Gellner 1983; McCrone 1998), I will draw upon the insights of A.P. Cohen, who has argued that, 'Local experience mediates national identity and, therefore, an anthropological understanding of the latter cannot proceed without knowledge of the former' (Cohen 1982: 13). I will also draw upon the work of Michael Herzfeld, who calls upon ethnographers to study nationalism in terms of the social intimacy that local communities are able to generate (Herzfeld 1997).

I will argue that villagers constitute and perform locality and nationality through the idioms of kinship, length of residence and a class-based idiom of manual work and 'life as a physical existence' (Connerton 1989: 101). A consequence of my argument that the local mediates the national is that framing Scottish nationalism via the prism of 'social contract theory' (Hearn 1998) or 'liberal nationalism' (Tamir 1993; MacCormick 1996) offers little ethnographic 'purchase' in post-industrial locations throughout Scotland. Another consequence is that the account which follows contradicts Nairn's characterization of nationalism as the bourgeoisie inviting 'the masses into history' (Nairn 1981: 340) because the Scottish nationalism presented here

1. Fieldwork in Cardenden, my natal village, was conducted from June 1998 to August 2001, and was supplementary to an earlier period of fieldwork in 1997 into the miners' strike of 1984/5.

is more accurately described as the working class inviting a reluctant and predominantly unionist bourgeoisie into playing its part in the creation of an independent state. As Brown, McCrone and Paterson found in their own research into class and nationalism, 'Support for a Scottish parliament has been higher in working class than in middle class groups in every survey that has ever asked the question' (Brown, McCrone and Paterson 1996: 153).

Ethnography from 'Nothing'

In giving a first impression of Cardenden I recall the beginning of fieldwork ten months after the referendum to establish a democratic mandate for the Scottish Parliament and a year before the opening of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999.² I remember the numerous instances of locals expressing an unguarded puzzlement as to why I would want to research their village. Whereas I could elicit supportive recognition when I mentioned 'working class nationalism', I invited bemused incredulity when I simply replied 'I'm studying Cardenden'. This apparent 'inferiority complex' with respect to locality or natal village is further evidenced by the best-selling crime-fiction writer Ian Rankin.³ Beginning with his first novel, *The Flood* (1986), which takes place in 'Carsden' and takes as its subject-matter 'a period of twenty years in the life and slow death of a Fife mining community', the literary representation of Cardenden throughout his substantial body of literature (twenty novels) is uniformly bleak:

He drove quietly, hating to be back here in Fife [i.e., in Cardenden], back where the old days had never been 'good old days', where ghosts rustled in the shells of empty houses and the shutters went up every evening on a handful of desultory shops, those metal shutters that gave the vandals somewhere to write their names. How Rebus hated it all, this singular lack of environment. It stank the way it had always done: of misuse, of disuse, of the sheer wastage of life.
(Rankin 1987: 3)

The accuracy of Rankin's depiction of his natal village was confirmed by my own experience when living in the main street for over a year during fieldwork. Living here allowed me to record many instances of what might be euphemistically described as the 'decline' of local space. I recall on one occasion at 4 o'clock in the morning watching two locals from my study in the attic as they methodically set about smashing the glass panels of a bus shelter. I noted how, being drunk, each kick that was aimed at the glass panels required some concentration, and any particular effort that failed to produce the required effect meant each assailant had to take the time to steady himself

2. The referendum was held on 11 September 1997, with 75 per cent voting in favour of the creation of a Scottish Parliament.

3. Rankin's now-famous Edinburgh-based detective Rebus is a native of Cardenden.

in preparation for the next attempt. These were grown men. And once the 'job' was finished to their satisfaction, they did not flee the scene of the crime but resumed their drunken stagger homeward with no change in pace. From personal experience, such an event was not untypical at the end of the working week. However, rather than listing more of such incidents I quote from an article that appeared in a local newspaper:

Cardenden residents say that they are living in fear after an upsurge in violence and vandalism on their streets. The village's active tenants and residents' association says that over the last six months groups of teenagers and young adults have been making lives a misery for others, particularly the elderly. And they claim it is only a matter of time before someone is killed in a drunken brawl.⁴

Following this in the article is an interview with a local resident quoted as saying, 'I have lived in Cardenden all my sixty-odd years and, in that time, things have never been so bad'. When interviewing older locals it was clear that there is a firmly established perception of the disintegration of locality, family life, crime and the fracturing of kinship structures during their lifetime. This sense of decline has reached a level of despair among some locals:

WILMA ANDERSON: Things are definitely changing. People just don't, you know ... When I look about I think we need a change – you know? Look at the trouble that's going on, trouble that was never there before!

P.G.: What trouble do you mean?

WILMA: Everything! It sounds silly, wee things – like families! I don't know ... Something has went wrong some place, something's happening to our country and I don't know what.

Similar comments came from another resident:

Imagine getting to my age and everything's worse! You know? Everywhere you look about you. At my age, every value, everything I ever thought about, the way to go about things, every idea I ever had, every value that I ever had, every way of doing things, everything I've got in my head, just turn that around, totally roundabout, reverse everything I've ever believed in and I might just get it right for 1999. (Rose Beattie)

With the decline of local work, the ethnographer of this de-industrialized space is faced with an obvious yet intangible 'nothingness' so that fieldwork can feel like a treadmill of chasing a passed 'something'.⁵ If local post-industrial space is represented as something of a dystopia, it is the industrial period from 1895 to 1965 that is remembered by older residents when Cardenden was an 'occupational community'. It was the advent of new technologies which

4. 'Villagers Seek Action to Halt Hooligans', *Fife Free Press*, 12 October 2001, p. 7

5. For further discussion of the issues surrounding the representation of class and the theoretical horizon that is opening to a new generation of 'producers of knowledge' see Gilfillan (2009, 2011).

enabled the industrialization of coal production on an unprecedented scale, with the sinking of the first deep mineshaft in 1895 and the transformation of an agrarian locality into a pit village with a population of 10,000 thanks to the migration of workers from all over Scotland to the Fife coalfields at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶

One such migrant was Dr David Rorie (1867–1946) who arrived in Cardenden as medical officer for the local coal company in 1894. As well as a medical doctor, Rorie ‘was an ethnographer ... the first folklorist in Scotland, and one of the first anywhere, to record the culture of an industrial community: that of the Fife miners’ (Buchan 1994: 5, 11). In his writings, Rorie collected and explained the many traditional practices and beliefs he found among the miners and peasants of Cardenden, referring to the ethnographies of the Torres Straits Islands expedition (1898) and the theories of magic articulated by George Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (1890). Rorie was interested in preserving a form of knowledge and a premodern outlook among the Fife peasantry that was about to be lost forever: ‘It is not pretended that all the customs, etc., mentioned were universal. Many of them were dying out ... But everything I have set down I have tested as having been at one time or other common in the district’ (Buchan 1994: 12).

Despite our research being separated by over a century, there is a continuity between Rorie’s fieldwork and my own insofar as, where Rorie conducted fieldwork at the point of the sudden and overwhelming transition of locality to industrialization in 1895, my fieldwork was conducted in the aftermath of the village’s transition to its present post-industrial era; where Rorie sought the survivals of a pre-industrial folklore, I often found myself trying to piece together ‘survivals’ of the industrial period, 1895–1965.⁷

Remembering Locality as ‘Occupational Community’

I’ll tell ye how bad it was, I went and joined the navy when the war broke out. I was Cardenden’s second volunteer. Johnny Fairgreaves, well he was a conscript, I was

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6. Local history group members have so far been unable to locate the dates of Cardenden pit which closed around 1920. Bowhill Colliery officially closed in 1966 with a peak employment figure of 1,544 in 1962; the Minto pit closed in 1967 with a peak employment figure of 757 in 1957; the Lady Helen pit closed in 1960 with a peak employment figure of 474; the Number 1 Dundonald pit closed in 1961 with a peak employment figure of 260 in 1952. Bowhill (Cardenden) Power Station had a peak employment figure of 36 in 1974
 7. The history group has met weekly since 1989 despite having been originally set up as a one-off course to run for ten weeks. This course was organized by the Workers Educational Association as a result of the interest in local history generated by the Corrie Festival held in the village in 1986 to commemorate the opening of the Corrie Centre the previous year. Joe Corrie (1896–1968) was a local coalminer, poet and playwright (see Mackenney 1985).

the first volunteer. And I was the first man ever to be released from [Cardenden] pit ... I was out in the Mediterranean in 1942 on HMS Brocklesbury during the war and I was still spitting black.

—Bien Bernard, 1997

For over two years I attended the local history group, and from listening to many conversations and stories it is clear that for those socialized in the era when Cardenden was a ‘pit village’ the experience of locality involves a sharp caesura due to the deindustrialization of the village in the 1980s.⁸ A locality which was once an ‘occupational community’ struggles with a lack of identity or definition in light of its sense of itself having been ‘liberated’ from old industrial narratives.

As a result of the decline of manufacturing and heavy industry during the 1980s,⁹ public sector employment (public administration, health and education) accounts for over 30 per cent of employment in Fife today. In the private sector, the post-industrial occupational landscape is dominated by electronics, telecommunications service providers, light engineering and tourism. More locally, thanks to high-quality rail and road transport links, local workers commute to Edinburgh and Glasgow, or even further afield. While some local tradesmen have secured contracts to work overseas for extended periods, more locally based tradesmen who rely upon the construction and related industries have been hardest hit by the current global economic crisis.¹⁰

Due to the obvious significance of the advent of post-industrial locality, I conducted research into the miners’ strike of 1984/5 thirteen years after the event and found that, among older locals generally and former miners in particular, the strike had come to mark the end of a way of life. As one informant, who had been a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) official at the time of the strike, told me:

They sat around the table in 1974¹¹ and said, ‘The working class will never do this to us again’. They brought out all the golden carrots. Sell their house, give them that. There’ll be no more one-third deposit for a car. Give them the money. Got our houses, car ... That was us beat. Give them a taste, make wee capitalists out of

8. In 1985 unemployment peaked in Scotland at 15.6 per cent.

9. The early 2000s saw an influx of Eastern European workers into Fife, with the result that the local parish priest, himself from Poland, celebrates weekly Mass in Polish in the local church for migrants in the surrounding area every Friday evening. Finally, the local presence of illegal economic migrants may be assumed in light of the local police having arrested a number of migrant workers from outwith the EU at a local fast-food outlet (26 August 2009).

10. The reference here is to the widespread belief that the defeat of the Conservative government in 1974 was a result of the miners’ strike of that year.

11. One of the charge hands to whom I often acted as ‘second man’ when working with East of Scotland Water during fieldwork had a tattoo commemorating the strike with the inscription, ‘I Never Scabbed’.

us. There's only two people bought their house in this street. And they've changed. Some of the attitude in the community has changed. You know, at one time we were a close-knit community. We all helped each other out. Now that doesn't happen. We've not got the same neighbourly love, friendship that we used to have. You have to cast your mind back. Well before the [1984/5] strike, you had all your local village pits. It was a close-knit community at that time. That's not here now. There's something missing in the community, the companionship, the camaraderie. The pits are all shut, there's something missing. (Alex Howie)

When the local pit closed in 1965, many miners were able to obtain work through the National Coal Board in other pits, some as far away as England or in the larger Seafield Colliery in nearby Kirkcaldy, which when it closed in 1987 effectively brought coalmining to an end in Fife.¹² As one miner recalled:

I worked until the last day of 1985. Right up until the 31st of December. That was my last shift. For a lot of Cardenden miners that was their last day. (John Gilfillan)

Much of the significance of the 1984/5 strike is that it has come to symbolize the beginning of the post-industrial present. Unsurprisingly, older informants identified the high watermark of locality with that of the coalmining industry, and listening to their stories I was to form the impression that the highly homogeneous reality of the single-occupational community produced a level of community which, remembered up to seventy years later among some members, reproduces again this sense of *communitas* among them as they perform their 'memory work':

The first blast of the day was at 5.25 A.M. and lasted for five minutes. Shorter blasts were then emitted at 6 A.M., 9.30 A.M., 9.50 A.M., 1.30 P.M., 2.00 P.M., 5.30 P.M., 5.50 P.M., 9.30 P.M. and finally at 10.00 P.M. There was, too, the sound of silence. I can recall five: learning the deaf and dumb alphabet at the Cubs; watching the funeral procession of Johnny Thomson, the Celtic goalkeeper in September 1931, and eight weeks later the funerals of nine of the ten men killed in the Bowhill Colliery disaster; looking at the first pictures of Belsen concentration camp in the *Pathé* news at the Goth;¹³ and finally the two-minutes silence at 11.00 A.M. on November 11th every year in remembrance of those who died in the service of their country in two World Wars. (Adam Ingram, retired miner)

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12. There was once a Goth picture house adjacent to the No.1 Goth pub which has long since been demolished; the site has recently been made into a car park. All that remains of the cinema is a rusted rectangular metal frame where the cinema programme was displayed, still attached to the wall of the pub.
 13. Tom, born in the Fife coastal village of Buckhaven, opened his shop in Cardenden in 1953, 'just after the coronation', having lived most of his life until then in the coastal village of Dysart. He retired in 1989.

This evocation of communal living through major events of the twentieth century is repeated in descriptions of more mundane local events which characterised village life:

All the children made their way to their school about lunch time on the Saturday in July. The local bands, pipes and drums and brass, turned out to lead the procession. The children from Denend School waited patiently at the sweet shop at the foot of Station Road and joined in the procession as it passed by, then on to the Goth to collect St Ninian's School and Auchterderran School pupils ... The streets were lined with mums and dads, brothers and sisters, and aunties and uncles, all cheering as the children marched past waving wee flags and balloons.

In this quote there is an evocation of abundance, a spectacle in which nothing is lacking; a belonging to locality with crowds of children in their own way ensuring the future of the village. Along with local pipe bands, schools and generations coming together in annual rituals, there is an evocation of the lived reality of local community as a physical, inter-corporeal event; of generations of families with aunts and uncles and the extended family living locally; streets filled with families and friends and neighbours and traditional Aestival festivals participated in by the whole village. In light of this richness, the present post-industrial experience of locality is inevitably seen in terms of decline:

HUGH: But then the pit and Co-op shut, all the wee things. All the pictures [i.e., cinemas] shut. You go up Bowhill now and it's always like it's half- shut. You had movement of people all the time.

NAN: When you had the pictures, when the pictures come out and you were driving, you had to go like a snail because they never walked on the pavement, they were on the road.

Today it is hard to appreciate the Cardenden of a peak population more than double its current size and the dozens of local clubs and societies which characterized village life. When Buchan (1994) cites Rorie's resignation from the twenty-two positions he held on various local committees upon leaving Cardenden, we catch a glimpse of a conspicuous local civic culture, a 'thick' production of locality in contrast to the present-day where children's play groups and mother and toddlers groups have to close because of a lack of volunteers and children.

However, a clear sense of decline is only half of the story informants tell. It is clear from the photographic record which the local history group has gathered together that the years of industrialization, the 'golden age' of locality, was also the heyday of material want, class struggle and class distinction. The preponderance of photographs of scenes of colliery managers, businessmen and their wives and local professionals in the photographic record of locality is also reflected in the architecture of the village where, as a rule, simply walking through the village and noting large detached houses is to identify

the former residence of pit managers, doctors and other professionals. As one former miner told me:

See, when you were a boy, if you saw the minister coming you crossed the street. If you seen the doctor coming you crossed the street. If you saw the police coming you crossed the street. See, that was the elite, the literati, you didn't ... you just never mixed. Never. Never the twain shall meet. Right? The minister was a friend of the coal owners. He was in the manager's pocket. They were all in the manager's pockets; all the business men. Oh no, you never mixed with nobody, never mixed with nobody. (Bien Bernard)

While older informants reminisced about 'the good old days' they would sometimes, as a conclusion, tell me they would not want to go back to the 'society of scarcity'. In terms of better housing conditions, for example, local shopkeeper Tom Henderson told me:

The best thing that ever happened was selling the council houses. The improvements they made. Inside and outside. New doors, central heating, double glazing. The improvements are unbelievable. It certainly improved the schemes. The improvement is terrific. (Tom Henderson)¹⁴

Tom was referring to the programme of renovation of local-authority housing that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At this time something of a revolution in living conditions occurred as the vast majority of local houses were significantly improved. Shortly after this period of renovation, most local authority tenants exercised the 'right to buy' their houses introduced by the Thatcher government; this presented tenants with the financial incentive of acquiring their homes at prices considerably below their market value in light of their length of tenancy. In addition to this refurbishment and privatization of local authority housing stock, between 2003 and 2008 private property developers have built approximately two hundred new houses in Cardenden.¹⁵ In stark contrast to these present-day developments, it was only in 1946/7 that the original miners' dwellings which had been built by the local coal companies to attract miners were demolished and replaced by the current houses. It was also during the postwar period that streets were given the 'proper' names they retain to this day as, prior to this, they had simply been referred to as First Street, Second Street and so on.¹⁶

14. While Fife Council has given planning permission for many more houses to be built locally, the current global credit crisis has meant all local large-scale housing developments are on hold.

15. When I asked why the streets had originally been numbered this way, I was told a Mr Muir, the manager of Bowhill Colliery in 1895, had returned from honeymoon in America and borrowed the American system of naming streets. As Adam Ingram told me, 'Once we discovered there was a Sixth Street in New York we felt better'.

16. A number of elderly would-be informants (especially women) were clearly angry at the success of Scottish nationalism and would not bring themselves to talk to me about their views on the new Parliament but preferred to slam their door shut.

As well as a dramatic improvement in housing conditions, having been born into a 'society of scarcity', older retired informants are enjoying the 'society of affluence' and the fruits of long working lives of continuous paid employment thanks to a postwar economy that saw full employment for over a generation. These are members of a working-class generation that, when they gather at funerals, talk about their holiday plans with each other; where they have been and which Mediterranean or Baltic or Caribbean cruise they are about to go on or have recently returned from. Self-conscious about their new affluent lifestyles, they say among themselves: 'And to think we are off on cruises. When we were growing up, who would have thought, eh?'

The 1945 and 1979 Generations

In the light of data gathered during door-to-door interviews after the restoration of the Scottish Parliament, I propose two ideal types: On the one hand there is the 1945 generation, which I define as those born before 1950. On the other, there is the 1979 generation, which designates those born from 1960 onwards and who came to political consciousness anytime between 1979 and 1997. While this classification leaves those born in the 1950s somewhat 'lost in the middle', I introduce this distinction only as a heuristic device to locate two poles of a continuum; what decides whether someone is a member of either generation is the degree to which they tend to identify with the industrial past or the post-industrial present. I intend this distinction as a heuristic device in mapping the major ruptures and continuities in the experiences of locality, society, culture and nation across the industrial and post-industrial divide and my argument that working-class nationalism is a generational politics of the first post-industrial generation.

From my first few field interviews it was clear there exists a generation that is antithetical to any meaningful engagement with current political developments, so that the ethnographer of Cardenden would seriously misrepresent reality if he were to write 'we are all nationalists now, more or less' (McCrone 1998: 33). From my fieldwork experience, a majority of the 1945 generation sincerely identify with Britain at a personal and cultural level to the extent that they prefer to speak contemptuously of politics and politicians and present themselves as indifferent to politics, rather than face the challenge of 'reflexivity' and rethink their cultural and personal loyalties to 'being British'. This British identity runs sufficiently deep to politically nullify events such as eighteen years of Tory minority rule, deindustrialization and the miners' strike of 1984/5.¹⁷ These findings were confirmed by what I heard amongst local-history-group members among whom it seemed that, so accustomed had they become to the 'absence' of Scottish history, they were unable to reconcile themselves to the events of 1999. As the Workers'

17. Anne is a 1945 St Andrews University graduate in history.

Educational Association tutor told me when I announced that my research was concerned with present-day Cardenden and politics, as opposed to the *history* of Cardenden:

Oh, we're not interested in politics and religion. Two things. And that goes back to 1986. And we were all retired then. We didn't talk about that as that was too much trouble and division. (Ann Mead)¹⁸

More evidence that the return of Scottish history was unwelcome came at a meeting on 19 April 1999, a few days prior to the inaugural Holyrood general election, when, to try to take advantage of the media coverage of this event and stimulate discussion, I informed the group of my intention to conduct door-to-door interviews to ask locals their views on the new parliament. In the discussion that followed, Hugh emphatically announced, 'Ah'll no be votin'. At this, Annie said she too would not be voting in what was being represented in the media as the first 'democratic' election to a Scottish Parliament. Many of my informants refused point blank to see the new Scottish Parliament as anything other than what Thomas McLanders termed, 'A lot of rubbish from what I've seen of it', so that at this stage of fieldwork I felt compelled to abandon my search for a working-class nationalism, feeling that I had made a blunder to have imagined such a thing existed in light of what seemed like a boycott of Scottish history by a local history group.

It seems clear that the experience of the high-point of locality as occupational community is highly integrated with the idea and practice of a convincing and even triumphant 'Britishness'. Something of this 'integralism' is glimpsed in the following quote from the local history-group tutor, Anne Mead:

Auchterderran was my primary school in the thirties ... The school had no wireless. I especially remember that. On the day of the launching of the Queen Mary, a pupil was dispatched to the lodging of Miss Mackay in Woodend Road, near the school to await the naming of the liner. Her landlady listened to the launching on the wireless, then the pupil was sent back to school with the name written down and sealed in an envelope. The message went round the classrooms and the pupils were able to pass the news on to their families at home, for few people had wirelesses at home either. (WEA 1991: n.p.)

For the 1945 generation, the high point in class-based politics is seen as the creation of the Welfare State, and this is congruent with the high point of being British: the Second World War. This conjunction remains deeply defining of their identity and politics. In direct contrast, I argue that the

18. Clubs celebrating and commemorating the life, work and politics of the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) remain familiar throughout Scotland and the Scottish diaspora. One of the earliest local clubs was The Auchterderran Jolly Beggars' Club, founded in 1912. The Bowhill People's Burns Club, founded in 1940, drew its membership from the Bowhill Communist Party – including the local writer Joe Corrie and my paternal grandfather Harry Gilfillan. For more information go to www.bowhillpeoplesburnsclub.co.uk.

period of the right-of-centre Conservative Party government, led by prime ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major between 1979 and 1997, greatly motivated the resort to nationalism among a younger generation due to the dismantling of what remained of a *fides implicita* in all things British they may have inherited from their parents' generation. The 'generational gap' I am proposing then is not confined to the shift from an economy of heavy industry to a post-industrial service-sector economy, or the inevitable discontinuity in historical experience between the generations. The gap is as much cultural as economic and historic.

I recall a New Year party at the turn of the millennium hosted by a former miner who, shortly after midnight, asked for some Scottish country dancing to be put on the television. When this request was refused, the host complained, 'But that's our culture!' – only to be laughed at by his sons and their friends. 'It might be your culture bit it's not ours!' explained his youngest son. Similarly, when attending the funeral of a retired miner, at which some of his fellow Burns' Club members were present, one of his sons, an Oxford-educated Dominican friar, remarked how 'dated' was the genuflection to Burns in the oration earlier in the day.¹⁹

These incidents I interpret as indicative of how a *longue durée* understanding of what it is to be Scottish and working class is at an end among the 1979 generation. Paradoxically, among this younger generation – which in the next section I will describe as the 'social carriers' of nationalism – a particular cultural patrimony as represented by the eighteenth-century Scots language used by Burns is a dead language for today's younger generations, and is therefore a metaphor for the death of the uptake of a certain idea of Scottish culture held by a previous working-class generation. All of the local institutions of working-class Scotland – including the local Burns' Club, the local masonic lodge, the British Legion and war-memorial clubs – are of a certain time and culture which the younger generation will not reproduce.

Looking at old photographs from past local events hanging on the walls in what was, until 1992, the Miners' Welfare Institute, in every scene of any communal celebration such as an annual dance, the ubiquitous Union-flag bunting strikes one as belonging to another era as all such decoration has long gone. In proportion to the disappearance of the acceptability of the Union flag, the Scottish saltire flag of St Andrew has grown in popularity and legitimacy as a decorative feature at all such social occasions.

This difference between the two generations is also clear from the way in which they talk about the politics of education and Scottish history. At the local history group, members often expressed what they felt was the systematic absence of Scottish history from their educational experiences. I found unanimous agreement that the history they were taught at school

19. This was a front-page *Sunday Mail* newspaper article (24 October 1999) highlighting the lack of historical knowledge among Scots.

contained ‘nothing about Scotland’. The following exchange between old-age pensioners was typical:

ADAM: It’s one thing I regret when I was at school, I never learned a thing about this village.

ANNE: We never learned a thing about Scotland when we were at school. Even at school we never ever done anything but English history.

ADAM: It’s something that didn’t bother me then but it does now. We were taught about England but never Scotland. And never the history of Fife.

Among the younger 1979 generation, however, a politics and ‘politics of knowledge’ is increasingly constituted via Scottish nationality and the rejection of ‘Britain’ as an organizing category of experience, identity, politics and geography. The following quote from Peter, a 39-year-old plumber, is typical of the far-more politicized views of the younger generation:

It’s all more or less persecution. I think we’ve been kept at that level [lowers palm towards ground] all the time. You weren’t told anything about Scottish history because it could have caused trouble. And all those football matches with Scotland and England in the 1970s, it would have been even bigger bloodbaths because it would just be like the English coming up to Culloden or Stirling Bridge and all that f—ing carry on all rolled into one. That’s a lot of the reason why they never told you f— all about it. I mean, that thing in the paper today about teaching children Scottish history.²⁰ When we were at the school, that would be 1972, one of the teachers we got, he was Scottish National Party. He used to turn round to you and say, ‘Right then, when was the battle of Hastings?’ An every c— says ‘1066’. ‘Right then, when was the battle of Culloden?’ No c— knew. So he’d tell you. So for a whole week when we got Modern Studies he was telling us about Scottish history until one day he come in and says, ‘Eh, right, I have been given a warning’. He’d been pulled up by the headmaster who said. ‘You’re not here to teach children, you’re here to teach them what the O level is about, not what’s happening round about them’. And this is all coming to light now, twenty year down the f—ing line. But I mean, really, we should know more about what’s happening. What sticks in your mind when you were at the school? It’s 1066, King Harold getting the f—ing arrow in his eye, that big tapestry f—ing thing, Guy Fawkes f—ing setting fire to ... Trying to think of something that happened in Scotland at that same f—ing time and you wouldn’t know.

If one were to change a few details, it would be hard to distinguish the above from the discourse of colonized peoples reflecting upon the education system put in place by their colonial masters. We might therefore interpret the above as a lucid critique of Scottish education as the central institution in the reproduction of domination and a disabling ignorance of the past. What I would like to highlight, however, is the sheer availability of Peter’s analysis to himself. The above quote is the last three minutes of a ninety-minute interview

20. The joke referred to a once-popular singer who suffered from anorexia nervosa and had recently died.

and I propose that the key to Peter's interpretive lucidity lies in the fact that he reads recent Scottish (educational) history from his class position. Leaving aside the question of 'empirical' accuracy, if he is lucid in his critique of an enforced historical amnesia it is because he is doing class analysis, drawing upon his internalization of social structure which not only structures his perception but structures his field of perception – that is, structures that which counts as significant knowledge. We may say that Peter can read so much history using one basic interpretive key because so much of history is indeed taken up by the reproduction of the social structure. He is lucid because his mental structures of perception are structured by the structure of history which is itself structured by the reproduction of the hierarchical social structure. This allows him to narrate historic events and incidents *ad libitum* because, whatever particular field is under consideration, the same structure or pattern is reproduced and the same interpretive horizon is able to read it as a matter of habitus. Finally, because his 'psyche' is conformed to this structuration, there is a characteristic 'libidinal' investment in expression that emerges from this habitual reading and explains why this is often a characteristic of working-class men, something which the next section will attempt to illuminate a little further.

Nationalism as Performing Embodied (Social) Being

My ethnographic point of entry into the reality of local nationalism is a game of football played between Scotland and England on 13 November 1999 to decide which team would qualify for the Euro 2000 tournament. As the game was played four months after the restoration of the new Parliament, an institution which had been absent for nearly three hundred years, it seemed a good opportunity to witness how informants 'performed' national identity.

An hour before the start of the game I made the short walk to the Railway Tavern on what was a warm sunny day. As I entered the interior of the pub I stood in the doorway to the lounge bar, allowing my eyes time to adjust to the dark smoke-filled interior as the curtains had been drawn to block direct sunlight. I was immediately struck by a noisy, colourful, crowded scene: national regalia and bunting were displayed everywhere; flags, saltires and lion rampants hung on walls and the ceiling, faces painted white and blue, and most of the crowd waving football scarves and wearing hats and replica football shirts. Along with this visual spectacle came a constant noise from a large group of local men (and a few women) assembled inside. There was an incessant exchange of banter and anecdotes going on; shouted greetings and conversations, orders for rounds of drinks being arranged in loud voices and a relentless cacophony of conversations and news, stories and anecdotes and one-liners being told and enjoyed by anyone within earshot.

After a few moments I was able to make out my hosts sitting along the wall on the right-hand side who motioned to me to join them. As I squeezed

into the gap opened for me, Dauve asked what I wanted to drink and then shouted to one of our company being served at the small lounge bar half-way along the left-hand side: 'Billy! Two more pints!' while pointing at me in explanation. Perhaps to anticipate my asking why he ordered more than I asked for, he explained: 'You need to order two rounds at once. It's f—ing mental getting a round in'. Buying multiple rounds of drinks seemed to be common practice to avoid having to waste time queuing at the bar. Most of the small tables were rapidly, if not already, full of pints of beer and lager and spirits, and there was a constant stream of individuals carrying trays of drinks, carefully picking their way to and from the bar to their table. On the far wall was what was soon to be the centre of attention: a giant television screen on which football pundits were already airing their views.

Amid the noise and movement, an individual would stand and begin to sing. Being instantly recognized, the song would be taken up by one and all. Anecdotes being told were put on hold mid sentence until the chant ended and the story could resume. After saluting everyone in the company, I listened to Vickie, a 35-year-old mother of three describing how earlier in the day she had telephoned her English brother-in-law and played the national anthem of Scotland down the telephone. After pulling this 'stunt', she told us her brother-in-law had matter-of-factly asked if Vickie wanted to speak with her sister, before she concluded: 'He never even mentioned it. Imagine doing that over the phone and he never even mentioned it. Of course, he's English'. Next, I chatted with Drew, a joiner with Fife Council, who was speculating as to the probable identity of a local who had appeared in one of Ian Rankin's novels. Drew informed me the fictional character had sung REM's song 'Losing My Religion' in the same lounge we were sitting in, and he felt confident it had to be Stevie King. Next, Drew absent-mindedly remarked to the company: 'I see Leena Zavaroni left millions when she died there'. Thinking the conversation had taken a serious tone, I asked 'Is that right? I never heard that'. This allowed Drew to deliver his punch line: 'Aye, apparently she left a few million in dinner vouchers'.²¹

Inevitably, given that the focus of the day was a longstanding contest between Scotland and the 'auld enemy' (England), it was only a matter of time before the conversation turned to politics. After Drew came Dave, a local father of two in his mid thirties, who informed the company he had been working in England the previous week and, affecting an upper-class English accent for the company, informed us how he had 'been getting it all week ... Oh, the Jocks this and the Jocks that'.²² Dave then described how he had established common Labour-voting ground with his English colleagues as a means of minimizing the difference of national identity in the run-up to the play-off, before adding: 'Aye, we'll see how they f—ing like it when

21. The expression 'Jock' is a colloquial term for a Scotsman.

22. The Scottish National Party (SNP) is the main nationalist political party in Scotland and, up to the time of writing (2011), heads a minority government in Holyrood (Edinburgh).

we all vote SNP'.²³ Dave's final comment sparked more comments from the company which were brought to a conclusion by a 36-year-old warehouse worker: 'The English are not happy unless they're oppressing somebody' – a comment said without fear of contradiction. As the two teams prepared to walk onto the pitch, all attention was directed to the television screen and the events being transmitted live from Glasgow. An already excited atmosphere began to reach fever pitch, and when the Scottish anthem was being sung by the players and spectators in Glasgow, it was being sung to the rafters by everyone present in the Railway Tavern.

If I had hoped to observe national identity, I was not disappointed as the whole day acted as a shibboleth of identity and belonging. What I found remarkable was the relentless energy and emotion; the availability and intensity of emotional responses which produced a total immersion in each and every moment of the game. From the gestures and language, it was plain that locals are Scottish via their embodiment, and they relished these occasions for practising *communitas*. As a first step in an analysis of the day's events then, if we take the view that '[t]he nation is primarily a psychological or symbolic concept; in Mackenzie's words "it is not merely a statement of fact; it is a state of feeling"' (McCrone 1992: 204), it seems that uncovering the heart of working-class nationalism lies in answering the following question: What are the social conditions of this passion, or what is the idiom or the means of acquisition of this passion?

It is clear that there is a 'structure of feeling' present, as the passion I witnessed on this particular day is something I have witnessed many times before. While the nation is being 'imagined' and 'constructed', membership of the national group seems to be a matter of 'feeling' via a class-based habitus and the performing, in all of their sensual, visceral and bawdy idiom, practices of identification. Locals came alive to a preferred experience of themselves triggered by a symbolic confrontation with an 'other'. The day's events revealed what, following Chatterjee, might be termed the deep 'hinterland of being' (Chatterjee 1993: 132), or working-class *dasein*, to use Heidegger's term (Heidegger 1962). It seems clear that such set-piece occasions are enjoyable because they are occasions to release and express fully localized, class-based, gendered and nationalized selves via their 'structure of feeling', something that the earlier quote from Alex suggests is routinely denied them in the post-trade union workplace, in post-Thatcherite New Labour politics and in the middle-class public sphere. In the Railway Tavern, then, individuals can be themselves in spaces where their Scots language, gestures and mannerisms are not 'out of place'. It is clear that the day triggered an intense performance of solidarity, sociality and locality. If my interpretation of the structuration of emotion on display when watching a football match is not entirely incorrect, we can argue that the social function of working-class nationalism and its

23. Of the 651 seats in the Westminster Parliament, 72 (or 11 per cent) were allocated to Scotland. Since the 2005 general election this number has been reduced to 59.

signature embodied practices is to restore the imagined caesura between self and a stratified society, and, when deployed as a politics, its function is to restore the imagined caesura between the nation and the state.

Throughout the afternoon, what was on display was a repertoire of non-verbal embodied gestures and paralinguistic communication and expression along with the use of vernacular Scots which made for a community of embodiment characterized by all manner of spontaneity and exuberance, including one individual jumping onto a table and exposing himself all the better to perform his shouted insult at a virtual 'other' on a television screen. In light of such empirical data, what is required of anthropological theory is an emphasis upon the body as a locus of meaning. In this regard, Connerton's view on how bodily practices bear meaning is useful:

[I]ncorporating practices depend for their particular mnemonic effect on two distinctive features: their mode of existence and their mode of acquisition. They do not exist 'objectively', independently of their being performed. And they are acquired in such a way as not to require explicit reflection on their performance. (Connerton 1989: 102)

I propose working-class nationalism be viewed as a form of embodied meaning whose medium of acquisition is that of physical work or labour, so that we may view Scottish nationalism as the politicization of (working-class) being; as a performance of embodied (social) being.

Scottish Nationalism: Politics without England

It seems to have been our generation that started it and they're going to finish it off. My mum and that, she thinks we should get it [independence] now, but when I was growing up she just voted Labour. Whereas now they see us, me an all my mates vote SNP so we're starting it. We've got the parliament, and the ones that are growing up, they'll hear it more from us than we did from our mum and dad, so they're going to pick up on it.

—Steven Haggart, 1999

In May 2007 the Scottish people elected their first government committed to an independent Scotland. Ten years previously, during the British general election of May 1997, the right-of-centre Conservative Party, the only major political party opposed to reforming the Union with England, failed to have a single candidate elected in all seventy-two Scottish constituencies.²⁴ I propose that this rise in Scottish nationalism be historicized from the viewpoint of a particular generation to be understood 'idiomatically', as A.P. Cohen

24. Having won a record fifty seats at the 1992 general election, one wit summed up his feelings in large red paint on a gable end in the Craigmillar area of Edinburgh after the election: 'Vote Labour for Fifty Useless Bastards'.

recommends. After 1992, then, in light of four consecutive general election defeats – in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992 – for the political Left, it became clear to a generation coming to political consciousness during this period that democratic politics and voting along class lines was a naive political strategy.²⁵ In the immediate aftermath of the election in 1992, even convinced unionist politicians openly admitted the unreformed Union with England was deeply problematic for the majority of Scottish voters. For a younger generation subject to new opportunities and responsibilities for exercising reflexivity, the question after 1992 was whether they would reconstitute the political playing field on a purely national basis; that is, constitute a politics without England.

In my first interview during fieldwork one informant advised me:

I mean if you can't stand up for your own country ... I mean, OK, I'll give you an instance of what I felt. I was talking to a guy one night, I was at a party, and there was a Dutchman there. And I've worked in Holland, I know how they think, how they work, how they behave and all the rest of it ... And this Dutchman was making a fool of himself, he was enjoying himself, having a good time. And somebody was sitting – they were all Scotch people – and he turns an' says, 'You're nothing but a f—ing arsehole'. And he says, 'Aye, maybe I am', he says, 'but I govern maself. There's a difference'. That summed it up. That summed it right up.

Throughout fieldwork I spoke and listened to members of an older generation who had resolved to remain Labour Party supporters. However, when I interviewed Roberta Catherine, the chairwoman of the local Labour Party, in 1999, she freely admitted to a deep malaise among Labour activists in light of what was viewed as New Labour's desertion of socialism.

ROBERTA: I've got a photo taken with Cherie [Blair] and they're nice people, but they're Tories.

P.G.: You can say that?

ROBERTA: I can say there's a bit of Tory in them. Aye. Come on now! They're rotten with money. Where's an Old Labour like my dad, who went down the pit on his hands and knees and voted Labour and a [trade] union member all his life; what does he have in common with Tony Blair?

P.G.: You're talking heresy!

ROBERTA: I know! [laughs]. I know it's not right but we've all I suppose got those kind of feelings ... I think he's got Tory values! Three year ago, I stood out on the streets in all the villages in Fife ... and especially in Cardenden itself, at that particular time, I could have got a 100 per cent Labour vote. Today I'll only guarantee you 20 per cent of a Labour vote.

P.G.: I thought Cardenden was quite solidly Labour?

ROBERTA: Aye, but they're Old Labour. And they're Left. I could name you a few people of this village who've been Labour voters and members of the Labour Party all their lives but are weary! I shouldn't really be saying this to you, I'll get shot

25. Roberta is referring to Gordon Brown, MP in Westminster for the Fife constituency of Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath and UK Prime Minister from 2007 to 2010..

by Gordon!²⁶ Let's be honest, a lot of the Labour voters, they'll only vote, they're no politically minded. I hate to say this, but if you were putting a monkey in this village, the village of Bowhill [the central area of Cardenden] would vote Labour. Because it's part of a tradition. They don't know any better.

If there is a crisis among Old Labour supporters who cannot reconcile themselves to a post-socialist Labour Party, there is a younger generation who, while sharing the disaffection of their parents, are pursuing a politics of identity via nationalism having seen from their fathers and mothers that voting Labour was an ineffective working-class politics. The quote which opens this section nicely domesticates the contention of Anthony Smith that, 'the main battle of the nationalists is so often fought out within its chosen ethnies against the older self-definitions' (quoted in Eley and Suny 1996: 124), and it helps situate Scottish nationalism within an intimate inter-generational, familial context. The force of this particular nationalism emerges not from any prolonged meditation upon the Union or events in a reified public or political sphere but from the mundane realities of class and culture as they are inter-generationally lived and discussed in countless inter-generational family conversations that occurred throughout Scotland over the past thirty years in thousands of working-class homes and localities.

With the advent of post-industrial capitalism and neoliberal globalization came the end of the occupational landscape characteristic of the industrial era as well as the end of the postwar 'consensus politics' of the 1945 generation during the period of office of Margaret Thatcher. If we consider the year-long miners' strike of 1984/5, there occurred something approaching the contestation of the state at the everyday level where miners, their families and neighbours and friends, were all drawn into this struggle. Practices of picketing, monitoring movements of coal, monitoring miners' observance of the strike, organizing food kitchens, rallies and so on formed part of an everyday resistance to the anti-trade union and anti-miner government of the day as well as the forces of law and order deployed to enforce government policy. When we add the introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland in 1989 (one year before implementation in England), a third of Scots from the outset were set to refuse to pay what was viewed as a tax introduced to appease middle-class home owners faced with increased rates set by local authorities to pay for local government services. Especially among young single working-class people still living with their parents, this civil disobedience was the psychological continuation of 1984/5 on another front, and a form of politicization that again reached the everyday level of young people's lives thanks in part to the widespread campaign of non-payment and

26. The refusal to pay the Poll Tax was led by opposition politicians such as Kenny MacAskill, Minister for Justice in the Scottish government up to the time of writing (2011), and recently at the centre of a political storm over his decision to release the convicted Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset al-Megrahi on 20 August 2009.

civil disobedience.²⁷ This was perceived as another attack on localities and livelihoods that fuelled politicization, the response of nationalism, the end of politics on an all-British basis, and the pooling of resistance with the English working class, which was viewed as having failed to resist Thatcher at the ballot box in 1979.²⁸

Conclusion: Neoliberalism and the Question of Being

The process of post-industrialization destroyed the industrial strongholds of imagining and practising the idea of 'Britain' among a younger working-class generation, such as all-British industries and all-British trade unions. As a direct result, the British state lost much of its legitimacy among a younger generation in the 1980s, and after 1992 in particular it was derided by nationalists as a 'failed state' and a consensus was established which identified the multi-national United Kingdom as the fundamental barrier to political and national freedom. In her determination to pursue a neoliberal agenda throughout the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher tore up the postwar politics of consensus in favour of governance from a position of strength, and eventually engendered a retaliatory 'politics of weakness' in which a younger generation followed suit and broke with the postwar consensus politics of their parents, mobilizing outwith the parameters set by the workers' movement since the late nineteenth century. If working-class Scots saw in Thatcher their nemesis, they seem to have borrowed the same unapologetic integralist approach to advancing the interests of class and nation and achieved something no previous generation achieved: a politically significant integration of class and nation. If Ulrich Beck is correct to maintain that class biographies 'become transformed into reflexive biographies which depend on the decisions of the actor' (Beck 1992: 88), then it seems the rise of nationalism is one of the more direct political consequences of 'reflexive modernization' among the 1979 generation. This is so insofar as a process of detraditionalization has meant the political, religious, national and cultural allegiances of previous industrial generations – an all-British identity and Labour Party electoral allegiance, and a particular modernist and dominated working-class sub-culture – are at an end.

In light of the 1997 general-election result, where every Conservative Party candidate who stood for election in Scotland failed to get elected, Scotland is a clear example of Friedman's thesis regarding the contemporary widespread crisis of legitimacy among traditional state and political elites, where the

27. At the 1979 general election: 'It is calculated that [in England] skilled workers swung 11½ [per cent] to the Conservatives, unskilled workers 9 per cent, and that as a result the Labour Party attracted only ... 45 per cent of the working class vote ... In Scotland the swing to the Tories was 0.7 per cent' (Gamble 1983: 131 n.1).

28. As early as 1894 the Scottish Labour Party, founded six years earlier, merged with the English-based Independent Labour Party.

pursuit of economic globalization and post-industrialization results in a crisis of legitimacy in the eyes of national electorates (Friedman 2003). Insofar as Thatcherism represented an elitist denationalization of economics, it engendered an unprecedented nationalization of politics among the Scottish working class. Scottish nationalism must thus be understood in the context of a working-class electorate which had previously rejected mobilization via national identity. Thanks to four consecutive victories for the neoliberal Conservative Party due to its electoral popularity in England, I contend that, ultimately, there occurred a *politicization of being*, and included in this 'question of being' was a sharp awareness of the Scottish working class's complicity in reproducing its own domination. Seen in this light, Scottish nationalism is a politics of class which rejects the previous 1945 generation's complicity in reproducing a 'dominated' relationship to its own being (working class and Scottish).

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